

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1979 - 1980

12 February 1980

DOCUMENT 1-754/79

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Development and
Cooperation

on the proposals from the Commission of the European
Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-702/79) on

- I. a decision concluding the Convention between the
European Economic Community and the United Nations
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
(UNRWA) on aid to refugees in the countries of the
Near East
- II. a regulation on the supply of sugar to UNRWA as
food aid

Rapporteur: Mr D. ENRIGHT

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PE 62.396/fin.

By letter of 21 January 1980 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the Commission Communication to the Council concerning the Renewal of the Convention between the European Economic Community and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and the Proposal for a Council Regulation on the supply of food aid in sugar to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Development and Cooperation as the Committee responsible and to the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Budgets for their opinions.

On 24 January 1980 the Committee on Development and Cooperation appointed Mr Enright rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 1 February 1980 and unanimously adopted the Motion for a Resolution and the Explanatory Statement.

Present: Mr Poniatowski, chairman; Mr Denis, vice-chairman; Mr Enright, rapporteur; Mr Cohen, Mrs Focke, Mr Habsburg (deputizing for Mr Lücker), Mr Michel, Mr Pearce, Mrs Rabbethge, Mr Sablé, Mr Sherlock (deputizing for Mr Marshall), Mr Simmonds, Mr Vergès, Mr Wawrzik, Mr Woltjer (deputizing for Mr Glinne).

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached.

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A

The Committee on Development and Cooperation hereby submits to the European Parliament the following Motion for a Resolution together with Explanatory Statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council on

- I. a decision concluding the Convention between the European Economic Community and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) on aid to refugees in the countries of the Near East
- II. a regulation on the supply of sugar to UNRWA as food aid

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 1-702/79),
 - having regard to the **report of the Committee on Development and Cooperation** and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 1-754/79),
1. Approves the Commission proposal to renew the Convention between the Community and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) for the years 1979 - 1980;
 2. Believes that the Convention, with the amendments proposed, will contribute to a more efficient and complete programme of aid; but is concerned that action be taken with considerable urgency to prevent the possibility of the ending of UNRWA's operation;
 3. Welcomes the fact that the Commission sent a fact-finding mission to the places in which UNRWA is active in order to assure itself that the aid provided was being used for the purposes intended, and not towards any other needs; **observes** that as a result of this the signature of this Convention has been delayed;
 4. Considers it essential that the European Community can exercise effective control over the use of funds made available to international organizations; welcomes the fact that Article 7 of the new Convention establishes the means for this control.
 5. Notes, however, that food supplies were made available on schedule during 1979 to meet the dire needs of the refugees, and hopes that following the signature of the Convention, financial aid will be made available as soon as possible in accordance with the terms of the Convention;

¹ OJ C 30 of 7.2.1980, p. 7 and 10

6. Approves the proposal for a Council Regulation to make available the necessary quantity of food aid in the form of sugar for the year 1980;
7. Would wish to send a small delegation at some time in the future to ensure the effectiveness of the operation.

B

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The purpose of the Commission's proposal is to renew for 1979/80 the Convention with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees. This Convention, which was initially signed in 1972 for three years, and succeeded by a second Convention from 1975 - 1978 was not renewed in 1979 due to certain difficulties which are mentioned below. The third Convention, which is to be signed now, concerns 1979 and 1980.

The Commission's Communication also contains a proposal for a Regulation on the supply to UNRWA of 6,086 t of white sugar as food aid, in 1980.

The previous Convention operated in the year 1978 under three headings

1. A Basic Rations Programme which included the supply of 6,000 t of sugar. However, other EEC contributions of white flour and butter-oil were supplied outside the framework of the Convention under the normal food aid procedures;
2. A Supplementary Feeding Programme which was designed to assist the most vulnerable amongst the refugees, by providing skim milk powder, hot meals and extra rations to those especially in need;
3. Cash contributions to the Supplementary Feeding Programme. These contributions covered the purchase of preserved foodstuffs, and other expenditure, including staff costs. (The majority of these staff costs were for canteen staff, and other persons concerned with the refugees).

The Commission proposal provides an analysis of how this aid was used, where difficulties were encountered, and makes clear that any aid or financial sums which were not utilised would be available in 1979.

The new Convention differs from the previous Convention in two significant respects:

Firstly, it incorporates the Community's contribution to the Basic Rations Programme in toto, which means that all aid to UNRWA from the Community will come under a single set of procedures and can be assessed as a whole;

Secondly, the new Convention covers two years only, and not three as previously. The reason for this is that UNRWA's mandate from the U.N. General Assembly

lasts until 30 June 1981, so that for 1981, a new Convention will be necessary if and when the General Assembly extends its mandate.

The new Convention envisages the supply, in 1979, of 40,000 t of cereals, 3,200 t of butter-oil and 700 t of skim milk powder; in addition, 6,153 t of sugar has been allocated to UNRWA. The total value of these products at world prices (CIF) is estimated at 10.25 million EUA, and, in point of fact, these products have already been shipped. For 1980, it is proposed to provide 40,000 t of cereals, 3,900 t of butter-oil, 1,550 t of skim milk powder, 6,086 t of sugar, which, together, have an estimated world price value (CIF) of 12.19 million EUA.

The second aspect of the Convention is the cash contribution, which is US\$ 3,266,000 for 1979 and US\$ 3,600,000 for 1980. The specific uses to which these contributions are put are spelled out in the Commission's proposal; they include the purchase of preserved foodstuffs, rental of premises, contractual services and staff costs. Staff costs are the highest item, but it should be remembered that these staff are an essential part of the programme which covers the needs of the most vulnerable people out of the total 1.7 million refugees registered with UNRWA. UNRWA's on site staff concerned with this programme number about 700 people.

These proposals are made in the light of UNRWA's requests for 1979 and 1980, which they go some way towards meeting, particularly as regards the Basic Ration Programme. The aggregate request from UNRWA for 1980 can be estimated at 17.3 million EUA and the proposed amount to be made available under the Convention is 15.79 million EUA.

It has to be asked why the Community is signing a two-year Convention after more than one year of that period has elapsed. The reason for this is that some doubts were expressed in certain quarters about the way in which aid, particularly financial aid, was being used by UNRWA, and as a result the Commission sent out a mission to the areas concerned to examine on the spot the activities of UNRWA and, in particular, the way the aid was being used, so as to establish as definitively as possible that the aid was not being used in the conflict taking place in the Middle East. The mission visited Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank in order to satisfy itself in this respect. Signature of the Convention now will enable financial aid for 1979 to be released, (as this has been held back) as well as providing for proper and orderly planning for 1980.

The Commission proposal finally contains a proposal for a Council Regulation on the supply of food aid in sugar, which provides the necessary means to implement the supply of sugar proposed in the Convention for 1980 (to 6,086 t).

The Committee on Development and Cooperation welcomes the proposal to renew the Convention with UNRWA, and the proposal for a Council Regulation to make the necessary quantity of sugar available in 1980.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the Chairman to Mr PONIATOWSKI, Chairman of the Committee on Development and Cooperation

Strasbourg, 13 February 1980

Re: Communication concerning the renewal of the Convention between the EEC and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).
(Doc. 702/79)

Dear Mr Chairman,

The Committee on Budgets considered the above-mentioned communication at its meeting of 12 February 1980.

The committee is in favour of renewal of the Convention with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

It should, however, be impressed upon the Agency that it must select appropriate methods of distribution and supervision to ensure that the Community aid is not misused.

The Commission should be allowed at all times to verify that this condition is being observed.

Yours faithfully,

(sgd) Erwin LANGE

Those present:

Mr Lange, chairman, Mr Notenboom and Mr Spinelli, vice-chairmen,
Mr Adonnino, Mr Arndt, Mr Baillot, Mr Barbi, Mr Bonde, Mrs Hoff, Mr Hord,
Lord O'Hagan, Mr Orlandi, Mr Pfennig, Mr Schön and Mr Taylor.

